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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 11, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GLENN THOMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

HONORING RAY ROGERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend, Representative Ray Rogers of Pearl, Mississippi.

On November 17, 2018, Ray completed his 55th and final season of service as the Pearl High School Voice of the Pirates. For 55 years, Ray volunteered his time and energy as the public address announcer for the Pearl Pirate football games and was so committed that, in 55 years, he missed just one-half of one game in 55 seasons.

Now, the reason Ray missed the first half of that game was so that he could attend his daughter's wedding rehearsal dinner. After listening to the game on the radio during much of the dinner, Ray left as soon as the dinner was ended so he could announce the second half of the game.

Ray's commitment to the Pearl community was recognized several years ago when leaders of the Pearl Public School District decided to name the football stadium Ray Rogers Stadium.

Ray was one of the first students to attend Pearl High School when it opened in 1948 and was the first quarterback for the first football team in 1949.

Ray has been a public servant and leader for Pearl and Rankin County in many other ways. In 1983, he was elected to serve District 61 in the Mississippi House of Representatives and has been reelected every 4 years since, most recently in 2015.

Ray has spent 35 years in the State legislature working to improve our schools and infrastructure. As chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, he has been a tireless supporter of our National Guard and veterans and was instrumental in the effort to build three veterans homes in Mississippi with the help of then-Congressman Sonny Montgomery, who served the Third District of Mississippi.

Ray has been a long-time member of the Management and PEER Committees—a testament to the respect and trust that his fellow legislators have for him. He has served as a mentor and role model for many incoming representatives over the years, and Ray's example has been invaluable to me. He has taught me by the way he lives, by what he does, and by how he treats everyone with respect.

Ray Rogers has lived a life of service to others, and I know that he believes his most important service has been to God and his family. An active member

of McLaurin Heights United Methodist Church in Pearl, Mississippi, Ray is the father of three daughters, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. While he is proud to be known as the representative and the Voice of the Pearl Pirates, he is proudest to be known as Daddy and Pop.

Ray's wife, Shirley, has shared his passion for serving others. Shirley served for two decades as the first city clerk for the city of Pearl and after that was a director of personnel for the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Like Ray, Shirley is an active member of their church, and she is a loving and supportive wife, mother, and grandmother.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having the opportunity today to honor Ray Rogers—my State representative, the Voice of the Pirates, proud father and grandfather—and to congratulate him on his impressive record of public service.

Thank you, Ray, for your friendship and for setting an incredible example for all to follow.

FORGING A BETTER NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the last time as a Member of Congress. For the past 6 years, it has been an extraordinary honor to serve the residents of central and northwest Connecticut as their Representative in the House.

The title for this job is a humble one: Representative—not emperor, not knower of all things, but Representative.

Congress was not my dream, but making a difference was. In 2005, my then 15-year-old daughter challenged me to either run for the local town council or stop complaining. I ran. I

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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found that I could get things done, first on the town council and then as a State representative.

I came to Congress with a desire to make a difference for people, to help solve their problems, fight for affordable quality healthcare, ensure education that addresses the needs of every child, work across the aisle for better jobs and better pay for Americans, and keep us all safe and free.

Yet I arrived in Congress in the aftermath of the terrible shootings of 20 6- and 7-year-old children and six educators in the town of Newtown in my district, 6 years ago this coming Friday. My task immediately became how to truly care for and represent those families and be an effective voice for taking action to prevent gun violence. At the time, I did not even know how to find the elevator to get to my attic office in the Cannon House Office Building.

John Dingell, the longest serving Member of Congress, took me under his wing and helped me navigate these Halls. He gave me invaluable advice. He said:

Elizabeth, always remember this: What you do is very important. But you are not important.

He also told me:

It is your job to know your district and vote your district.

How right he was. I learned my district. My team and I worked with others to get lots of legislation passed to help veterans and their families, to support STEM education for women, girls, and children of color; to modernize and upgrade our infrastructure; and to fight the scourge of opioid addiction. We helped thousands of individuals at home cut through red tape and get much-needed support. By working with people, we were able to help government work for people.

Here are some things that I have learned:

The American people are good, great, and eager to see our democracy work better;

Sharing credit is not only the right thing to do, but it works;

If you listen to others, if you look for and build on common ground, you can get things done even with people with whom you disagree on many issues.

The first step is often the hardest. In politics, Mr. Speaker, you need to earn support. You are not entitled to it. You will fail sometimes. You will not meet your own high expectations. You will disappoint people. You will lose an election, but you get up the next day and you try harder.

If there is nothing you would be willing to lose an election over, you shouldn't run for office. Democracy needs people who are prepared to lose their job to make a difference.

Democracy is not about perfection. Democracy is about doing your best every day and bringing out the best in others; and when we fail—which we will—we should not give up. We should get right back to work.

Mr. Speaker, you shouldn't run because you know you will win; you should run because there are things worth fighting for.

If we remember our common values rather than call into question each other's integrity, there is much we can do together. Democracy is something we do; it is not something we tweet about.

Democracy is hard. It is not a spectator sport. You don't need permission in this great country. Democracy gives us—each and every one of us—the opportunity and the right to run, to serve, and to make a difference.

American democracy is a great thing, but it requires us to pitch in and to do our part. We have the opportunity—and in these challenging times for our Nation and the world, I believe we have an obligation—to get involved.

I want to thank my amazing family for their love, their support, and their sacrifices over more than a dozen years of elected office. I thank the voters who entrusted me to work on their behalf. I thank my excellent staff who have worked so hard and ably. I thank the many colleagues who generously guided me and worked with me on issues of common concern for the American people.

In closing, John Dingell's words return to me:

If you ever look up at the Capitol Dome at night and it doesn't send shivers down your spine, you don't deserve to be here because you aren't sufficiently in awe of American democracy.

I can say without hesitation that the white of the Capitol Dome gleaming in the night still sends shivers down my spine. It always will, for we are fortunate enough to live in this amazing country where we have the right to choose our leaders, to raise our voices, and, together, to forge a better nation and a better future for all our children.

FARM BILL CONFERENCE REPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I proudly signed the farm bill conference committee report because, after years of hard work, we are set to deliver a win for rural America. Quite frankly, it is a win for all Americans who count daily on access to affordable, high-quality, safe food.

We know that farm country is hurting. USDA recently announced that net farm income for this year is dropping by 12 percent to levels we have not seen since 2002. There is hope though. By passing the farm bill conference report, we can give producers and their lenders certainty. They will know what farm policy will be in place for the next 5 years.

We also made modest adjustments to the Marketing Assistance Loan program to help with cash flow after har-

vest and to providing marketing for U.S. commodities.

There are also important enhancements to dairy policy included in the conference report. Building upon investments made to the dairy safety net as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, we are offering new coverage levels for the first 5 million pounds of production, which drastically reduces premiums on certain levels for larger producers.

These are just some of the many updates in the 2018 farm bill that will set our American farmers on a better path for the next 5 years.

The 2018 farm bill strengthens the farm safety net, protects crop insurance, maintains and preserves conservation funding, improves SNAP program integrity and incentivizes work, and, importantly, provides certainty to rural America.

This agreement reached between the House and the Senate strengthens and maintains important programs like the Price Loss Coverage, the Agriculture Risk Coverage, marketing loans, dairy margin coverage, livestock disaster programs, and crop insurance.

As vice chairman of the committee, I know that a lot of work went into building and negotiating a great bill for our farm families. I would like to thank Chairman MIKE CONAWAY and Ranking Member COLLIN PETERSON for their commitment to passing this bill in 2018.

This Congress, I proudly chaired the Nutrition Subcommittee. The House bill included provisions to give many Americans the skills needed to obtain a family-sustaining job.

While this conference report is a compromise, it does include significant incremental victories that will improve the integrity of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, so it will be more effective for those who truly need it. The Nutrition Subcommittee hosted 21 hearings on SNAP and heard from more than 80 witnesses on how to improve the program and work toward the ultimate goal of ending hunger in America.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. The 2018 farm bill makes real improvements to our Nation's largest antihunger program. These provisions will only further enhance the program so it will be there for the most vulnerable among us, the truly needy.

Now, I am hopeful that we can continue this conversation and soon revisit numerous provisions from the House farm bill's nutrition title. Specifically, there is so much more that can be done through SNAP to help more Americans find good-paying, family-sustaining jobs—an ultimate food security. That is the American way.

The farm bill conference report also helps improve our response to natural disasters, including catastrophic wildfires that have ravaged parts of the Nation. To help encourage new markets for domestic forest products, the conference report invests in research